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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

Researches in plant physiology

ATKINS¹ has written an interesting little book, the aims of which can best be expressed by quotations from the preface. "The general aim of the book is to present to senior students and investigators the results of recent work in a few of those branches of plant physiology which are at present attracting attention." "By such a presentation of portions of the science which are still in a state of rapid growth, it is hoped that further investigation will be stimulated. The choice of material by the author was, to a considerable degree, influenced by his familiarity with certain subjects of general interest, portions of which are being studied experimentally by the staff of the School of Botany, Trinity College, Dublin. Upon these, rather than upon other researches of equal or greater importance, he has felt qualified to write, on account of his first-hand knowledge of many of the methods employed. A small amount of hitherto unpublished work has also been included."

A list of the chapter headings gives an idea of the content of the book: I. The carbohydrates of the angiosperm leaf in relation to photosynthesis; II. Methods of estimating carbohydrates in plant extracts; III. The carbohydrates of the Thallophyta and Bryophyta in relation to photosynthesis; IV. The pectic substances; V. Osmotic pressure in plants; VI. The osmotic equilibrium between the cell and its surroundings; VII. The permeability of protoplasm; VIII. The permeability of organic membranes other than protoplasm; IX. The magnitudes of osmotic pressures and electrical conductivities in plants, and the factors which influence them; X. Osmotic pressure in relation to plant distribution, morphology, and cell division; XI. The functions of the wood; XII. The plant oxidases; XIII. The oxidases in relation to pigmentation, and the anthocyan pigments; XIV. The oxidases in relation to plant pathology and to technology.

As compared with a treatise on plant physiology, the book of course appears patchy, but this is an outgrowth of the aim, and is by no means an unfavorable criticism of the work. It is written in a most interesting as well as thoroughly scientific manner. On reading it one is convinced that it will attain its aim of stimulating research along many of the lines treated.—
WM. CROCKER.

¹ ATKINS, W. R. G., Some recent researches in plant physiology. pp. xi+328. London: Whittaker Co. 1916.